

Summary of Greg Vaquera  
May 9, 1997  
Dallas, TX

- . My name is Greg Vaquera and I am District Diitor for North Texas for the **League** of United Latin American Citizens (**LULAC**)
- . As a representative of LULAC, an organization which prides itself in working toward the improvement of the economic education **and** social enviromnent of Hispanics in America, I have to ask ¿**Por qué?** Why? Why are we still paying for an antiquated system that does not protect the rights of all the people?
- . As a self-employed, hard working American, I understand that competition **is** the common denominator of success or failure, of **efficiency** or inefficiency.
- . Competition means my family will have an option, that costs for my electricity bill will be less, and that I will have control over how much I pay for my utility bill.
- . People with fewer economic means are **truly** the ones paying the higher electricity bills.
- . I strongly believe that competition in electricity will improve the economic and social environment -- not only for Hispanics -- but for all of us who reside in the **United States**.

**Committee on Commerce**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Power**  
Hearing on **Electric Utility Industry Restructuring**  
**May 9, 1997**  
**Dallas, Texas**

Testimony **for Greg Vaquera, District Diir for North Texas - LULAC**

**Good** morning. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this hearing to discuss a critical issue to all citizens, and **specifically** the Hiic population. **My name** is Greg Vaquera and I am here to ask ¿**Por qué?** Why? Why are we supporting a system that is regressive, a system in which the people with the lowest income end up paying the higher price? Why do we not have a choice when it comes to electricity?

As a representative of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), an organization which prides itself in working toward the improvement of the economic education and social environment of Hispanics in America, I have to ask ¿**Por qué?** Why'? Why arc we still paying for an antiquated system that does not protect the rights of all the people?

Because of my active involvement in LULAC for more than twenty years, I have been able to meet many people, many living in lower income households and **many** working as many as three jobs to make ends meet. Many surviving day by day. The high costs of electricity for them are sometimes a matter of life and death. Why is no one protecting their rights?

People with fewer economic means **are truly** the ones paying the **higher** electricity bills. They often live in houses without proper insulation, and cannot afford the latest energy-efficient appliances. Unfortunately, for many, it is not a matter of choice, many **cannot** afford newer appliances or homes.

So I ask ¿**Por Qué?** – Why is no one protecting the consumers with the lowest income or the hardest individuals? Instead current legislation protects the interests of monopolies. Why?

As a father and civic leader I can personally tell you that I can't relate to shareholders or to protecting their investments. I can, however, relate to a **father** who has to decide between feeding his children or paying an electricity bill. I cannot understand how a shareholder feels, but I can understand the increase cost of putting my daughter through college and paying two electricity bills, without having a choice. I cannot empathize **with** a shareholder, but I can with a grandmother who has to decide between paying her electric bill or buying her medication to treat her diabetes. ¿**Por qué?** Why is there not competition in this industry?

Competition means my family will have an option, that Costa for my electricity bill will be less. and that I will have control over how much I pay for my utility bill.

**In** Texas, small savings from competition means big savings. Even 10 percent – would save residential **customers** like myself close to \$105 on **annual** electricity bills. Statewide. that's approximately \$1.7 billion in annual savings to residential customers.

Why don't we have a system where **consumers can** control **their** electricity **bills**? When I see that statewide residential customers could save **billions** annually, I think of how we could improve our neighborhoods with that money, how we could reinvest that money in the education of our youth – who, by the way, are our fastest-growing **segment**.

As a self-employed, hard working **American**, I **understand** that competition is the common denominator of success or **failure**, of efficiency or inefficiency. There are many small business owners that everyday compete fairly **with** others **in** their industries, so why not do the same with electricity? For me Monopolies are like dinosaurs, if you stop spoon feeding monopolies, they will become extinct.

**In** an era where time after time we have seen the positive impact of deregulation in other industries I and many others wonder why we don't have competition in electricity now.

I strongly believe that competition in electricity will improve **the** economic and **social** environment -- not only for Hispanics -- but for all of us who reside in the **United States**. Competition in this industry will bring numerous **benefits** to **all** customers: lower prices, greater choice, improved service, economic growth, and new much needed jobs

Sometimes I take for granted the primary freedom that the United States offers us -- to vote. to choose. That is why I leave you with this question: Why is it that in our country whose foundation is the freedom of choice, do we not have an option when it comes to electricity? ¿**Por qué?**